



The MilAtari Ltd. Edition

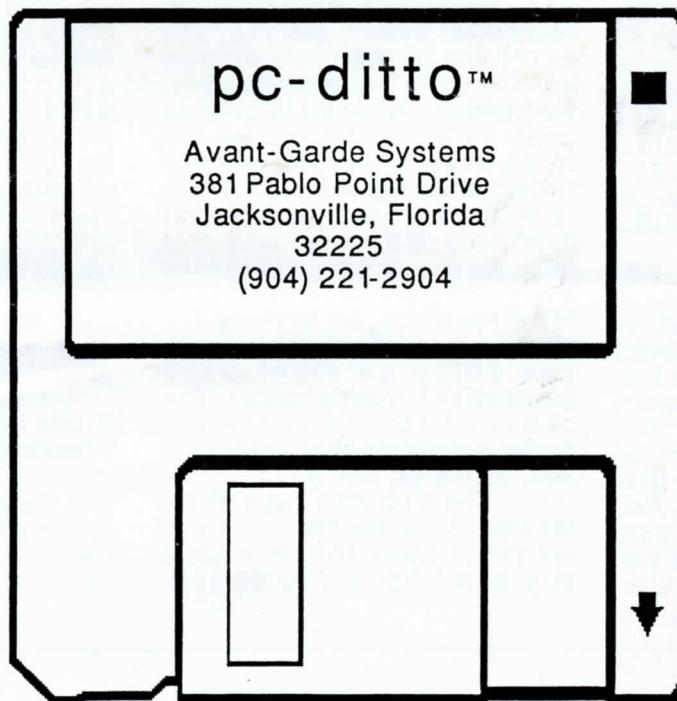
The Milwaukee Area Atari User's Group

VOL. 6 NO. 7

July / August 1987

Price \$2.00

WHAT HATH AVANT-GARDE WROUGHT?



NO REGULAR MEETING FOR AUGUST
COME TO THE MILATARI PICNIC
SATURDAY AUGUST 15TH, 1987
MCKINLEY PARK @ 12:00 NOON
DETAILS INSIDE!

AUGUST BOARD MEETING - SUNDAY AUGUST 23RD, 1987
SHAKEY'S PIZZA - 96TH & NATIONAL - 7:30 PM

From the President

**MILATARI UPDATE : CLUB PICNIC, AUGUST 15, 1987
McKINLEY PARK AREA #2, 12:00 Noon**

The first thing I wish to do is to talk about the club picnic. There is going to be soda, beer, brats, hot dogs, and chips at the picnic. I wish to thank the members of the board for their donation of a case of soda each, and Jim Morales for the donation of the beer, which has left the money for the club to buy the brats, etc. As of this printing I am not sure how much food will be bought, so it will be given to members on a first come, first served basis. I would still suggest bringing anything extra that you wish to. We also need some members to volunteer to bring grills, charcoal, charcoal lighter, ketchup, mustard, and possibly some kinds of salads (potato, jello, etc.)

There will also be drawings for goodies that have been donated by some software companies and local businesses. Those donating will be given full mention in the next newsletter.

Now, on to other business... We now have a public relations person, his name is Tom Bardenwerper. So if you know where we can get some low cost or free advertising to advertise the

club, please call Tom at 332-6762 between 6:00 pm and 10:00 pm and give him the information.

The club has gone big time! We now have our meeting times announced on the air! Listen to WEMP(AM1250) on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings the week before the meeting. Thanks to Jim Morales for doing this for us.

Jim is also the new newsletter editor, and I for one would like to see more articles coming from our membership. Remember, MilAtari is only as good as it's members. All I'm trying to say is that the board is trying to do as much as it can to make it more enjoyable for everybody, but we do need your help. So if you have purchased a new program, it doesn't take long to write an article for everybody's information (or do you enjoy an eight page newsletter?, your choice). The club could also use members to demo programs that they may like, both 8-bit and ST.

The club also has t-shirts for sale; \$3.00 for one and \$5.00 for two. I think this is a good buy and I hope you do too.

Also, don't forget to buy your club disk and or disks. The disks sell for 5.00 dollars each at the main meetings (you can also call the disk librarians). We do not mail any out, but we can use suggestions. The club also sells blank disks for both 8-bit and ST's. The club doesn't make much on the disks, but I do believe that this is kind of a painless way to support your user club.

So much for my sales pitch for the club. I would also like to ask that the membership support the people who advertise in the newsletter. Make sure that when you stop by that you mention the newsletter and let them know that you are a member of MilAtari. They are supporting us, so let's show them that they are not wasting their money.

Well, that is about all for this month. See you at the picnic!

Bruce Welsch
President, MilAtari Ltd.

p.s. Please bring your club cards to the picnic and sign-in so that only members are getting the benefits of the club. Bye.

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The MilAtari Picnic *Just a reminder...*

**McKINLEY PARK PICNIC AREA #2
ON MILWAUKEE'S SCENIC LAKEFRONT
STARTS AT 12:00 NOON**

WHAT WILL BE THERE:

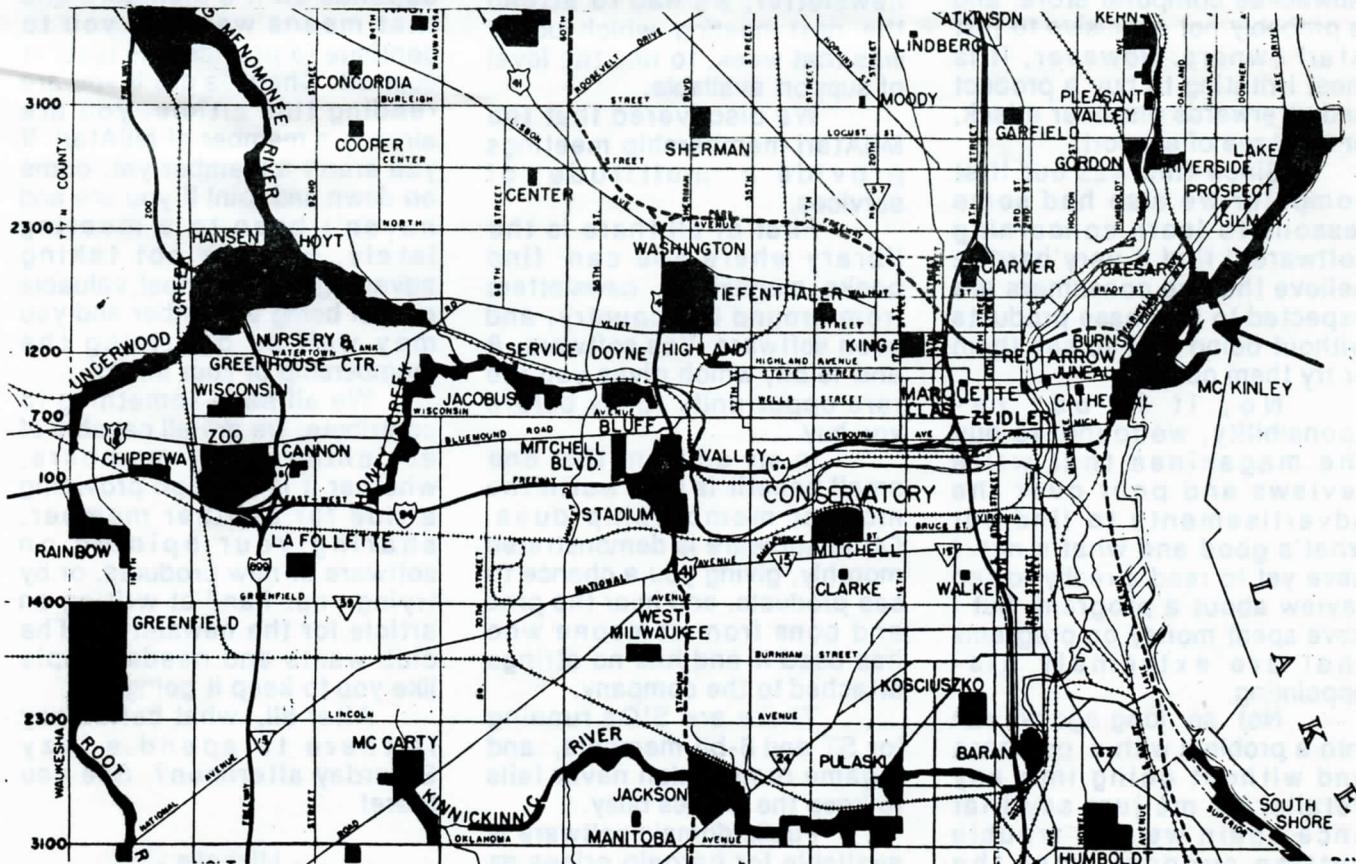
BRATS, HOT DOGS, BUNS, CHIPS, SODA & BEER

WHAT WE NEED YOU TO BRING:

**GRILLS, CHARCOAL, CHARCOAL LIGHTER,
PAPER PLATES, NAPKINS, PLASTIC FORKS,
KETCHUP, MUSTARD, TRASH BAGS, AND
ANY TYPE OF DISH YOU MAY WISH TO PASS:**

POTATO SALAD, JELLO SALAD, BAKED BEANS, ETC.

(There are picnic tables at the site, but folding chairs may not be a bad idea either)



Come On Down!

by Michelle Gross

We bought our first computer just about a year ago. For the price, the user friendliness, the graphics and many other reasons, we chose the ST. We are still happy with our decision despite the frustrations we experienced during the first few months after our purchase.

We quickly found out that few people in the store where we bought our ST from could help us with our problems and questions. As soon as they heard "ST" they would refer us to Joe Schmoe who only worked two hours a day three days a month. We have since found out that this wonderful service is not exclusive to one Milwaukee computer store, and is probably not exclusive to just Atari owners. However, it is most irritating to buy a product and afterwards discover a lack, or shortage of support.

Since this was our first computer we also had some lessons to learn concerning software. I find it very hard to believe that we consumers are expected to purchase products without being able to see them or try them out.

No, it is our responsibility, we found, to buy the magazines that write reviews and pour over the advertisements to find out what's good and what's not. I have yet to read a really rotten review about a program, but I have spent money on programs that are extremely disappointing.

Not so long ago we ran into a problem with a purchase and without going into any details, let me just say that once again we had trouble getting support after the purchase. In all fairness to the

people in retail sales positions, I understand that they all cannot be fully knowledgeable on every computer, but when there is no one available to help a customer after a sale is made, it is extremely frustrating for us consumers.

The salesman that was finally able to help us determine the problem, two days later, gave us a complementary issue of the MilAtari Newsletter. Things have not been the same since.

What we found from reading that newsletter is that there is support available from people who are willing and eager to give it. Well, we didn't find that just from reading one newsletter, we had to attend the next meeting, which luckily was that week, to find the level of support available.

We discovered that the MilAtari membership meetings provide a multitude of services.

First of all there is the library where you can find books, magazines, newsletters from around the country, and even software. Yes software, 8 and 16 bit, which gives you the rare opportunity to try before you buy.

In my opinion, that one small benefit is well worth the modest membership dues. Other software is demonstrated monthly, giving you a chance to see products, and hear the pros and cons from someone who has used it and has no strings attached to the company.

There are SIGs running for ST and 8-bit members, and a game room which never fails to keep the kiddies busy.

Public domain software is available for bargain prices as are blank disks, which the club

sells for a real good price. And don't ever leave before checking out Bill's Bargain Basement!

But you will find that the most valuable aspect of joining MilAtari and coming to the monthly meetings is the exchange between members. It is then that you can ask questions of veteran users, get technical with other enthusiasts, and give or get the latest hints on your favorite game. It is your chance for some one-on-one with some good, friendly folks who share a common interest.

Where's the catch? Well there is one thing worth mentioning. The club's success depends on it's members and that means we need you to continue to provide this level of support. Chances are if you are reading this article, you are already a member of MilAtari. If you aren't a member yet, come on down and join! If you are and haven't been to a meeting lately, you are not taking advantage of the most valuable part of being a member and you may well be depriving the membership of your input.

We all have something to contribute, we are all capable of enriching other members, whether it is through providing a ride for another member, sharing your opinion on software or new products, or by trying your hand at writing an article for the newsletter. The club wants and needs people like you to keep it going.

After all, what better way is there to spend a lazy Saturday afternoon? See you there!

- Michelle -

pc-ditto - The Real Scoop

by pc-ditto creators Bill & Ginny Teal

[Ed. note: This is a fairly long article, but given the significance of a real live MS-DOS emulator, I believe it merits the space. Our thanks to GEnie & the Teals for allowing it to be reprinted.]

(Reprinted from GEnie)

We would like to introduce ourselves: we are Avant-Garde Systems, manufacturer of pc-ditto for the Atari ST. The company is small, comprised of just two of us -- Ginny and Bill Teal.

First and most importantly, we wish to thank everyone who has supported us so far on just blind faith: dealers as well as consumers. In particular, we wish to say a special thanks to those on this message base who have carried the torch on our behalf until we could get here: Jeff Wimmer, Braun Tacon, Derek Mihoca(sp?) and a million thanks to Nevin Shalit in New York City.

Piracy -- We know that some rumors abound regarding the piracy of pc-ditto and the effect on Avant-Garde. We would like to go on record and eliminate any pesky rumors you've heard. A couple of weeks ago, we began to receive calls from dealers regarding piracy of our product. Not one or two, but in our phone log, now well over a hundred; fairly well scattered across the country. This might not seem unusual in this electronic age, but we were astounded by the sheer numbers of individuals who began contacting dealers and ourselves for support and disk drives. When we originally decided to enter the retail marketplace, we took into consideration that some piracy would occur. This, like similar events in other industries, goes with the territory. But, it still hurt our feelings, after we tried to give the market a good product, at a

good price, a free update, and to offer to listen to the market so as to improve the product and service in the future.

So, are we going out of business or do we plan to roll over? No. Thank goodness for those of you who supported us. You have shown us that the entire Atari market is not corrupt. Only, that it sometimes seems so. If you continue your support, and your friends continue, then we will work even harder to earn your respect, to provide you the best support we can and keep all the promises we've made. Maybe, if by providing great support, more updates, and maintaining good prices, most people who want the product will ultimately want the real thing.

Support policy -- Please send in your registration cards. Many manufacturers tell us that only 20 to 30 percent of these cards are ever returned. We are providing a free update. This will be the only way we will know where and to whom to send an update. Also, if you call us, we can not help you if your card is not on file. Lastly, we are making the next update free, as a way to entice you to tell us what you think. The next update will contain enhancements, rather than bug fixes. But, we want your input. We do want the product to be useful to you. So, call, write, or send a message to us here. [GEnie-Ed] About once a week we will visit this system, to reply to your questions. Usually, on Sunday. Since we view this medium as a technical support system, you may find that from time to time you ask us questions which we may not respond to. We will not give our opinion, speculate about the future, nor enter into debates of a non-technical nature publicly. Please send us E-mail, if you wish to cover other ancillary topics.

Because this system costs money, we want to save those who come here time and

aggravation, instead of covering a lot of irrelevant ifs, maybes, and should haves. It appears that this professional attitude is already in place here....we would just like to continue it. Thanks.

Finally, many of you may find it hard obtaining pc-ditto at your local dealer. We are working on this. We have one phone line. We are installing others. Also, we did not expect the overwhelming rush to buy this product. We had anticipated a slow summer in which to build up our credibility and advertise to dealers. Instead, you surprised us. Have patience. We won't forget you. By the way, our address is:

Avant-Garde Systems
381 Pablo Point Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32225
(904) 221-2904

A dealer order number is coming shortly.

Design of pc-ditto:

1. The Atari monochrome monitor (which we refer to henceforth as the Black and white or B/W) is not supported in production release version 2.0. Please do not buy the system if you have only the B/W monitor; pc-ditto will not work. There has been some confusion over whether the documentation or the outside packaging is correct. The "requirements" on the outside back of the packaging is correct. The B/W monitor support will be included in the first update. We make no apologies for our initial decision. Unfortunately, this decision excludes about 20 percent of the U.S. market (according to Richard Frick and Sig Hartman at Atari). Quite simply, we did not have sufficient time and resources to implement and test the monitor. Do we want to exclude this market? No. We are probably losing money right now. But, any manufacturer has to weigh opportunity costs of decisions. Our cost was to not support B/W monitor, or delay announcement

(pc ditto - cont.)

of the product by 3 to 6 months. We knew the window of opportunity for launching this product was this summer for both U.S. and European sales. Any later would most likely mean missing targets for advertising and promotions during the "back-to-school" and "Holiday season" buying periods. Approximately 40 percent of the microcomputer sales are made during these periods. That is why we officially state the B/W monitor support will be in the first update. Furthermore, we have been told by a major magazine reviewer regarding our product: we made the wisest decision. Had we chosen to initially support the B/W monitor, most people would have said "Ahhhh. Color is impossible." Instead, psychologically, implementing color makes people think B/W is simple. (Well, we wouldn't go quite as far as to say, simple. Just that it is about the same). In any case, there is one other rule we have about products. They are tested.

Should we prematurely release an untested product into the market, you would have to wait just about as long to get an update to fix it, should it be a disaster. We prefer your wrath now, and will work harder to recover your faith, when we release a solidly tested product. In the first instance, we destroy something we can never quite recover: your confidence in us and our product.

2. 80-track 5.25" drives -- not currently supported to read 40-track media (even if just to transfer data). We are working on a simple, utility which will get the job done under DOS. This will be out shortly. If enough need is voiced for this, we can always make a "hardware" switch, later.

3. Programs on our certified list -- my wife and I have limited financial resources. We tried to select DOS applications which have widespread appeal. Our most objective scorecard of the most popular programs is the list of top 40 IBM programs sold by the distributors: Softsel, Ingram, and Micro D.

We will continue to update this list about monthly; here, and with a list to dealers. If your favorite program is not here, that does not mean it will not work. But, like many compatibles, we are not perfect. (That's why we sell through dealers... so you can try before you buy). As we fix bugs and make other improvements, many non-working programs may start running. And, we appreciate all the calls you make regarding which do run. Please understand, our official list is only updated when we have tested the product ourselves. We make this policy because if you call with a problem, we can duplicate it (in most cases). For you to rely on someone else's word is less than professional for us, since we have to stand behind our product.

4. We never realized there would be such a debate over the poor little mouse. It certainly makes sense that if a mouse is attached, and free, that a product supports it. Well, when we surveyed the market to determine what dealers and consumers wanted, we were told "IBM PC XT compatibility." So, there is no mouse on a stock PC XT.

Two, most of the programs on the market directly do not support any mouse at all. What you will find is when you purchase a mouse, it will include two kinds of software: a mouse driver -- which knows how to talk to the mouse hardware; and applications interface software -- which is usually customized designed for the most popular applications, such as Lotus 1-2-3, and includes the pull-down menus, and the like. We intend to provide the driver. And, a generic mouse which generates cursor keystrokes, with maybe the right button to generate a user definable key (say, carriage return). Now, either will be selectable from our menu.

At this time, unless you already own IBM mouse interface software, from Microsoft, Logitech, Maynard, etc, then you may end up using Generic mouse. The cost of developing interface software is very large. Any one looking for a low cost market to develop for, here you are. Of

course, there are some public domain mice programs, such as PMM (poor man's mouse), available. We will keep you posted as we go.

5. There is no support for the European keyboards and timers yet. That version will be released to European distributors this summer.

6. The new blitter may help some screen updates, but we don't know. Little information about them, and the machines they will be supported on, is currently available.

7. Megas with 2 and 4 Meg memories, as well as upgraded 1.5 to 4 Meg STs will be supported by pc-ditto.

8. Color text support -- One IBM CGA mode, 80 column text, permits 16 color backgrounds and 8 color characters. The Atari ST only supports 4 colors in 80 column mode. We DO allow you to choose which 4 colors. Unfortunately, this is one limitation placed on us by hardware design. However, we have not found this to be very limiting. Try it yourself, before discounting the ST. Also, the other CGA modes are supported fully. Therefore, there is no loss of graphic color or resolution capability.

Current BUGS-----

Current bugs we are working on are:

1. PC-DFMT doesn't always like to format a blank disk without error.

2. Hard disks partitioned sometimes indicate all logical drives assigned to partition 0. This is especially true of separate external drive/controller combinations.

3. Documentation: a. We refer to TOS system disks in the manual. We mean GEMDOS format disks.

b. We refer to the Atari monochrome monitor in the manual. At the last minute, we left this in so we would not have to reprint the manual for an update. We do state on the outside package, however, that color monitor is currently required. c. There are minor typos in the Problem/solution section in the README.1st file.

4. Self-booting disks -- These are disks which require no (pc

ditto- cont.)

operating system to run. Generally, they are started using the CTRL-ALT-DEL key combination of rebooting pc-ditto. We perform a special check of the boot sector we start a disk with to ensure novice users have not left the GEMDOS disk in the A: drive accidentally. Unfortunately, as these things go, we look for a special IBM signature. To correct this, we will look for GEMDOS in the future. Please do not patch the system. You WILL cause irregularities in system operation, especially where disk writes occur.

Next Update Information -----

1. The next update to current owners of version 2.0 is FREE. Contrary to some nasty rumors that suggested otherwise.

2. The next update will be this Fall. Exactly when we do not know. As a policy, we announce products when they can be obtained right then. This is to prevent vaporware. For some of you, this may not seem soon enough. We are sorry. But, the software development road is littered with many dead bodies of consumers who relied on some vaporware date. Until someone can make an exact science out the viscous art of software development, we are stuck with the frailties of the inestimatable. Therefore, we will not lie.

3. Please, please, send those registration cards to us. Again, we do not know who you are without them. Consequently, we will not send you your update...which you deserve and have already paid for.

4. For dealers, we currently investigating how to do updates to help you get return customer traffic. Because of the piracy problem, and the fact that our product is not copy-protected, this is a very sticky situation. No matter what is resolved, you will be notified of updates, and your inventory replaced.

5. The reason for the FREE part of the update is two-fold. First, we don't believe in you paying us for bugs. If we did, we would have designed bugs into the system, marketed several add-on modules to fix different bugs, and

charged a lower price for the main product. We would like to treat you the way we want to be treated ourselves.

Second, we want to encourage you to let us know what enhancements will add value to your product. We are a consumer-oriented company. We do not invent technologies and foist them onto the public. Instead, we know that the way to continue sales is to improve the product and service to meet your needs. Sales only occur when needs are met. So.....what do you need? Don't be afraid to be absurd (though, don't just make things up either). We will review your needs. Implement those needs we can. If we can not, we will also tell you, and why. We are always looking for ways to improve our product. We're listening.

6. Topping the current list of needs are: B/W monitor support (selected for the next release) Mouse support -- Microsoft, Logitech, Maynard, Midi hardware support, Time/date carry over from the Atari GEM time/date.

Specific questions-----

1. Which single-sided 3.5" disk format to boot DOS from? Our utility, pc-dfmt, will not let you create a single-sided 80-track bootable DOS diskette, because the DOS you may be using could be lower than version 3.2. Thus, for DOS versions below 3.2, you may only create a 40-track single-sided bootable DOS diskette. You may, however, create 80-track data diskettes (containing no bootable DOS) for use under DOS versions below 3.2. See our user manual and README.1ST file for details. For DOS version 3.2, there is a simpler way to format high-capacity diskettes. You may also create bootable (that's right Bootable) 80-track single-sided DOS diskettes. This works for IBM and COMPAQ DOS versions. (For all other DOS makers, we haven't tested this). Create a Config.sys file containing the line:

DRIVPARM=/D:x/T:80/S:9/H:1

(replace x with a 0 or 1 depending on which physical drive is 3.5", 0 is

a: 1 is b:) Now, using the DOS FORMAT command, you can create the SS 80-track disk, optionally bootable with DOS.

2. Can't Avant-Garde find a way to override the DOS drives to reduce the confusion regarding device drivers with various letter assignments? Unfortunately, our job is to act like hardware. Once we begin to take over the functions of the DOS, we lose the compatibility and would probably introduce complexities in other areas. However, if you think you know the answer, let us know Thanks.

3. Can't Avant-Garde make the creation of the CONFIG.SYS and the formatting more automatic, say by using batch files? Maybe. We'll look into it. Everyone's hardware is so different, making a general purpose utility to accomplish this may still be quite a task. Any DOS programmers out there up to the challenge? (How about a DOS shell?) This is perhaps why many of you, inexperienced with DOS, may find that the GEM environment is so much easier to use. The command line approach to running a microcomputer is difficult and often ambiguous. Add to that the evolution of new hardware, even as simple as 3.5" drives, and some systems seem to be very poorly designed to handle it, without extreme contortions on the part of the operator. Anyway, we're looking into some sort of simplification.

4. Isn't there some way to improve the creation of 3.5" 720K disks? This is a problem inherent in the design of DOS. We will try to find the simplest and best way to create them. Let us hear your success tips. Maybe we can come up with the all around best "cookbook" rules to handle DOS formats.

[As of this printing, pc-ditto is available locally through both Computability and Mayfair Computers for under \$90.00. I think it goes without saying that based on the amount of work done and support shown by the authors, these people deserve our support. -Ed.]

Atari Gets Serious? (Well... Sort of.)

by Richard Raper
(Reprinted from BASE)

ATARI ANNOUNCES AGGRESSIVE NEW MARKETING CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT VIDEO- GAMES AND PERSONAL COMPUTERS.

Atari has stepped up marketing efforts for its personal computers and video game systems, according to Jerry Brown, Atari vice president and general manager for U.S. operations.

"Atari intends to remain the leader in video game systems and to increase its share of the U.S. personal computer market," Brown said. To do that, Atari has quadrupled the advertising and promotion budget for its personal computer and video game product lines.

As part of its new multi-million dollar marketing program, the company has developed seven new commercials, introduced new in-store display units, and designed new packaging for its video game systems.

Atari has developed three new commercials for its video game systems -- two for the new XE video game system and one for the 7800 video game system, said Mike Katz, executive vice president for marketing and

entertainment electronics.

The new commercials as well as existing commercials for the 2600 game system are scheduled to run on network television, spot television and nationally syndicated shows from September through December.

In addition, Atari will produce commercials to run on top-40 radio stations around the country from September through December, Katz added.

During the same period, print advertisements for the XE and 7800 video game systems will also run in comic books. This is the first time that Atari has advertised in comic books, Katz noted.

Atari is also offering its video game dealers new in-store display units for demonstration of hardware and software. The new display units are either self-running or playable.

Atari has redesigned the packaging for its 7800 video game system and has created packaging for its new XE system. Its new packaging for the XE game system, which features full-four color graphics, has a "beauty" shot of the XE on the front panel, photos of the product in use on the sides, and visuals of

screen shots on back.

Atari has also significantly increased its advertising budget for the Atari ST line of personal computers, according to Jerry Brown.

In its first television campaign for the popular ST line of personal computers, the company developed four commercials that are scheduled to run on network television, spot television and nationally syndicated shows during the third and fourth quarters.

The commercials highlight Atari's motto of "power without the price" by comparing the power, speed, memory and price of the Atari 1040ST and 520ST with comparable machines from IBM and Apple.

The commercials were prepared by Messner, Vitare, Berger, and Carey of New York City.

New print advertisements to support the television campaign for the ST line will run in consumer and computer magazines during the fourth quarter, Brown noted.

WARNING! DANGER WILL ROBINSON!

Helpful hints from around the Atari community.

XM301 MODEM WARNING

(Reprinted from the newsletter of the Atari Federation)

If you own an Atari XM301 modem, you may own an electronic "time bomb."

After a rash of hardware failures last month, which included smoking a disk drive and two printer interfaces, I found the cause of my problem to be my XM301. The modem worked fine, but was killing off my system piece by piece.

The reason has to do with the 13 wires coming from the serial I/O plug, although only nine wires are actually used by the modem. The other four wires have about 1/8 inch of bare wire showing, and are just hanging around, unterminated, waiting to touch something they shouldn't. I have checked other XM301 modems and this condition existed in them too.

Here is what to do IMMEDIATELY.

With the power OFF, remove the two screws from the back of the modem and lift off the plastic case. Inspect the wires where they enter the case. You will find four of the wires are not connected to anything. These four wires show any bare metal, cut it off.

Be careful not to let the cut off pieces fall into the modem board.

Next, tape each wire individually, so that it cannot possibly touch any other wires or part of the modem. Put the modem back in its case, replace the screws and you're done.

I've written to Atari regarding this problem, but have not received a reply as yet.

TWISTER WARNING

by Dwyann Dalrymple
(Reprinted from ACE)

The TWISTER formatting utility from STart Magazine has got to be one of the most useful items for the ST computer line to date.

It's ability to decrease the drive access time to a fraction of its former rating has indeed won many hearts.

There is an "improved" version of TWISTER (version 3) now out that increases the number of bytes of disk memory even more than the original version did.

The original version used only tracks 0-80 on the disk. The "new" version uses tracks 81 and 82.

Guess what? Using track 82 pushes the ST drive to its maximum reach. It has been discovered by one of our club members that the "new" version of TWISTER is a software method of damaging hardware. Multiple uses of the 82 track version of TWISTER knocked the internal disk drive of his 1040 out of alignment.

Estimated repair costs are in the \$80.00 range.

If you are using the original TWISTER program, there are no worries. It is only the "upgraded" version that is causing the problem.

NEO 1.0 SURPRISE

(reprinted from Pacenet ST)

The greatest thrill of the Atari display at the CES show was the presence of Dave Staugas, the author of NEOchrome. Dave is a truly pleasant and cordial fellow, who really seemed to enjoy being at the show. He was showing off the one machine that had the Blitter chip (it is FAST!!!) We even got to see the actual chip. The chip (yes, one chip) was piggy-backed to the 68000.

The new OS ROMs offered a choice from the OPTIONS menu-bar TITLE, simply called BLITTER. That is how it is turned on and off. The demo running was the flying bird demo, but with about 5-6 birds. The demo was running faster than ours with one bird! (I have this demo, and will shortly place it on ATARINET).

Also, Dave showed us how to get to the animation in NEO v1.0. That's right, NEO 1.0 has animation built in, but you have to know how to get to it thru the back door.

One note, the animation portion of NEO is NOT complete, but does work once you get it up. The trick is to select the GRABBER, then go over to the right side of the screen where the word GRABBER appears, with a blank box below it. Then you must place the arrow cursor on the 'R' IN GRABBER, and with one pixel from the R to the left of the arrow, and one pixel above the arrow, click on the mouse button. If you do this correctly, the icon of a movie projector will appear, and you are ready to go.....

TOS'ING & TURNING ALL NIGHT?

TOS Error listing by Allen P. Bargent

(Reprinted from MACE)

A growing number of ST owners and users have been asking lately about the meaning of those annoying TOS error messages you get when everything does not go according to plan. Here is a verbose listing of the most commonly encountered ones that should help you.

TOS ERROR CODES

- 0....OK. (no problem)
- 1....GENERAL error
- 2....DRIVE NOT READY: Device not ready, attached, or has been busy too long.
- 3....UNKNOWN COMMAND: Device did not understand you.
- 4....CRC ERROR: Soft read error.
- 5....BAD REQUEST: Device could not handle the command
- 6....SEEK ERROR: Drive could not perform a seek.
- 7....UNKNOWN MEDIA: Attempt to read a unformatted or foreign media.
- 8....SECTOR NOT FOUND: The requested sector could not be found.
- 9....NO PAPER: The printer is out of paper.
- 10....WRITE FAULT: A write operation failed.
- 11....READ FAULT: A read operation failed.
- 12....GENERAL MISHAP: Reserved for future errors.
- 13....WRITE PROTECT: You attempted to write to a write protected disk.
- 14....MEDIA CHANGE: The media has been changed since the last write.
- 15....UNKNOWN DEVICE: The operation specified a device that the BIOS could not recognize.
- 16....BAD SECTORS: A format operation detected a bad sector.
- 17....INSERT DISK: A request for you to insert a disk.

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IS THERE A "DOC" IN THE HOUSE?

An ST review by Jim Morales

TRIMbase
Data Management System
Talent Computer Systems
Published in the US by:
MichTron Incorporated
576 South Telegraph Road
Pontiac, Michigan 48053
Suggested Retail \$99.95

A good database is worth its weight in gold, an outstanding database is priceless. The inherent problem in reviewing a database is the wide range of tasks that the end-user deems absolutely necessary for adequate performance. Or, to put it more succinctly, one man's meat is another man's poison.

In reviewing MichTron's TRIMbase, I will attempt to hit as many of the "absolute musts" as possible. If you don't find something you need to know about, feel free to contact me through the MilAtari BBS.

Written by two gentlemen from Scotland, MichTron's TRIMbase is by most standards a good little package. Completely GEM driven, it is easy to use, very forgiving of errors, and, as one should expect from a 68000 based product, very fast.

It is perhaps the program's ease of use which causes it to be limited in its applications and for the most part, not a good business package. But, I'm getting ahead of myself, so, from the beginning...

TRIMbase consists of three independent program modules; define, maintain, and report.

The define module is used to set up and modify a database and implement relational functions. Much the same as many database programs, TRIMbase uses the "index card" approach to

record creation. According to the manual, your record (or "card") size is limited to your screen size. In medium resolution, this translates to 17 lines by 69 columns. In high resolution, 17 lines by 78 columns is the maximum.

Fields can be placed anywhere on the card and their length is limited by the right margin of the card you have created. This is sufficient for most name, address, phone number applications, but for complicated or very large fields that some business uses require, TRIMbase is not your solution.

There is a way around the size limitation, perhaps not enough for extensive business use, but enough to give a decent amount of flexibility. More on that in a bit.

Creating the card is cake-walk. Place cursor, type in the name of the field, and then identify the type of field you desire. You have five to choose from; Text, Number, Class, Date, and Block. Text, Number and Date are self-explanatory.

The "Class" field allows you to define what entries will be accepted as data and will reject any attempt to place information in the field which has not been previously defined. This is helpful in preventing typos and other equally nasty erroneous input. If, for example, you are creating a mailing list for a three state area, you could define a "state" field of the "class" variety that would only accept the input of; WI, MI, IL. The program would reject any attempt to place anything else in that field. This can be of great help when you're dealing with repetitive input.

As alluded to earlier, there is a way around the right margin limit of the

card. By defining a field using the "Block" option, you can include more than one line of the card in the field.

For example; a recipe's ingredients can be inserted in a block field of several lines, allowing a larger number of ingredients and the flexibility of different types of input (tsp., tbsp., 1/2 cup, etc.). This would allow you to search the ingredients field for a number of various items.

The Block field makes TRIMbase extremely flexible, but the size of the block is still limited by vertical screen height and number of available lines. You may find this unacceptable for extensive business usage.

Modification of your completed card is possible even after extensive data entry. TRIMbase will allow you to add, subtract or delete fields and then re-write all your data to fit that card into another file. Or to put it more bluntly, if you messed up and forgot something, you can fix it with relatively little hassle.

NOTE: The "define" module is copy-protected, but in a very limited way. Each time you create, or modify a database "card", TRIMbase asks you to insert the original disk in drive A for a "security check". According to the manual, the "password" TRIMbase is looking for is reproduced on the disk in several places so that the security "key" will continue to work even if large parts of the disk become corrupted.

In a nutshell, all elements of TRIMbase can be copied to a backup or hard disk and will work just fine. The original disk is only required for creating or modifying the database, NOT for searching, sorting, reporting, or data entry. In light

- (TRIMbase review cont.) - of software pirating, this seems to be a reasonable and fairly unobtrusive feature.

The "maintain" module of TRIMbase is where data entry and manipulation takes place. Once your "card" has been created, data entry is a breeze. From the maintain module you can search, sort, and cull statistics simply by pointing and clicking.

Because all the records are held in RAM, sorts and searches are extremely fast. So far I'm up past 400 records and a full sort, regardless of field, takes just under 4 seconds!

Searches can be done on any or all of the fields to your specification with "and/or" stipulations. You can be as specific in your searches as your needs require and TRIMbase will respond beautifully.

While setting up the database and manipulating data are extremely easy, it is the "report" module that makes this package a standout. The user has complete control of how reports are outputted to printer or disk. And I do mean complete!

The report generator is set up much like a word processor. You create the size report you need, tell TRIMbase exactly what information you want and exactly where to put it.

For those tired of straight columnar reports, this is a joy to behold! You can create your own form letter right on the report generator and insert whatever records you want wherever you darn well please! No more need for a mail-merge program!

In all fairness, the report generator is nowhere near as slick as some word processors and it does take some getting used to. However, it gives you full control over page layout, justification, text style, and even the foreign character set. Now that's what I'd call obliging!

Perhaps the most striking feature of the report generator is what I call the "option" feature. You can actually tell TRIMbase to examine a field and print something else based on the examination. Let's say for example that you've got fields called "marital status" and "gender" in your database. You can instruct the form generator to scan those two fields in each record and print "Mr." for a male, "Ms." for a single or divorced female, or "Mrs." for a married woman. The possibilities for this feature are limited only by your imagination, and once you've used it, you'll get spoiled real fast.

The results of your report can be viewed on screen prior to dumping to disk or printer, ensuring that you've got it just the way you want it. Disk files can then be used by your favorite word processor to add any touches that TRIMbase doesn't provide. If nothing else, the report generator alone is worth the price of admission.

Relational functions in TRIMbase allow you to select fields from one database and merge them with another, extract only certain fields from a database, or join two separate databases together. These functions are fairly automatic in nature once you've defined the files and fields you want to work on. Not only does this give you more power over the information you've input, but can save you from terminal writer's cramp.

TRIMbase does allow for the importing of files from other database programs, but the docs in this area are so terse that I haven't quite figured out how well this function performs. Which brings me to my major criticism of TRIMbase...

The documentation for TRIMbase is absolutely atrocious! For a company the size of MichTron to allow these docs to reach the store in this form is an embarrassment of

the highest order.

The print is small and hard to read, the illustrations look like they were done by a ten-year-old, and while I can appreciate the Scottish penchant for frugality, such terse writing has no place in an instruction manual! There are nowhere near enough simple walk-throughs of program features.

As beautifully executed as this program is, there is no excuse for the utter lack of extensive samples that for the first-time user are an absolute necessity. Despite the fact that the program itself is very easy to use and extremely intuitive, the documentation is nothing more than a headache looking for a place to happen. I know for a fact that the folks at MichTron have three laser printers in their office, they ought to be ashamed at the quality and depth of this manual.

All of which takes us to the final, and most important aspect, dollar value.

Initial TRIMbase ads called for a retail of \$149.00, which has subsequently been reduced to \$99.95. Had MichTron bothered to spend an extra five bucks per package to upgrade the manual to professional quality, it might have been worth that price. As the packaging and docs stand now, forget it. Some software stores are discounting the program to around \$79.95. At that price, based on the fact that I can't recommend TRIMbase for extensive business use, it's still a little too much. Mail order prices fall right around \$60.00 (Latest Computability ad; \$62.95). At that level, and for general light to medium database requirements, TRIMbase is an excellent addition to your applications library. As indicated, for \$60, the report generator alone is worth it, especially if keeps two very talented Scottish software writers producing quality programs for the ST.

STadel - A Walk-Through

The SysOp's Korner by Rich Dankert

Ok, this article will pertain to, as you have guessed, STadel, our new bulletin board system.

Background:

STadel, is a version of the popular bbs program on many IBM, and some CP/M systems throughout this great land. It was first conceived back in 1982, and has evolved over the years. Designed to mark the beginning of a new era in bbs's, Citadel was to be a different type of bbs from the rest in both the type of format, and it's basic operating structure. Citadel was to break the monotony of "the same ole' thing", every time you logged onto a bbs. It was, and has fulfilled all that it started out to be and then some.

It was first created on a little 64K CP/M Heath machine and as it caught on, as it was destined to, it was ported over to the MS.DOS world. After many modifications over the years, it was finally ported over to the ST in 1986 by David Parsons < Orc >, of Minneapolis, Minnesota fame.

Once ported over, David went to work. The first versions that came about were a different breed than the current version, but still operated somewhat the same. Our version is the latest, and will support multiple rooms, (message bases), any of which will support directories (Upload/Download capabilities). The system will allow three types of rooms, each of which will support a variety of operations. Space here doesn't allow going into detail about room operations, but the most important thing is to get you on the system, so here we go...

Logging on:

First thing to remember, and must be foremost in your mind if you own an Atari 8-bit system (800,XL/XE), is that you MUST be in ASCII mode. Just to make sure we're all on the same wavelength, here's a quick refresher:

ASCII is the abbreviation for 'American Standard Code for Information Interchange', however the Atari 8-bit machines have their

own type of character set. This was done to more easily access the superior graphics supported by this machine. Basically, what Atari did was to expand the Standard character set. This character set is known as ATASCII, the AT in the beginning meaning "Atari's version". Now, this does not mean that the 8-bit machines cannot support ASCII translation. The fact is Atari 8-bit machines can access both sets, and thus have the best of both worlds. The Atari 8-bit machines just have their own extended version of the code, although the first 128 character's are much the same, with the exception of the carriage return.

The normal carriage return on the 8-bit machines is the character string decimal 155, while the ASCII equivalent, which is really the standard, is decimal 13. STadel only recognizes a carriage return of decimal 13, which is why you need to be in ASCII mode to log on. So now that that's out of the way, lets step through logging on.

As I stated, make sure you're in ASCII mode. Now dial up our number; (414) 781-5710 and await a connect prompt. The system accepts both 300 and 1200 Bps operation and will switch automatically for your baud rate setting. Now once you have connected, you will get a prompt to type return. At this point, press your "Return" key. This will set the system software to the proper baud rate.

OK, now that that's all done, you will get this for your next line:

[L]ogin, [G]oto, [H]elp

Main Lobby>

Now the first thing to do, is simply hit the 'H' key for help, and the system will take you off to the Mail room, which will display the following;

[L]ogin, [G]oto, read [N]ew, [E]nter, [H]elp Mail>

This is where you MUST be to enter a message to me. What I first suggest is that you use the [N] (read new) command, and the

system will reply with a message, which will explain exactly what to do to apply for a password for entrance to the system. The first line that STadel will reply with is exactly like the following; [J]ump, [P]ause, [S]top and then the message.

I again reiterate that you should read this message fully, as this explains the procedure to obtain a password. If you happen to have the newsletter in front of you, skip the reading of the message, and use the [E]nter command to enter the following information:

Name -- In full please. No handles
Address - In full please.

City, State and Zip code.

Phone # - (xxx) xxx-xxxx

Work # if you desire

Occupation - This is so I can get a feel for the types of user's we have on the system. Where you work is not needed.

Membership #:

Computer Type - 8-bit OR 16-bit :
Whether Line Feeds are needed:

This is mainly for the 16-bit people out there that need the system to put out a carriage return and line feed to advance a line so everything will not just write over the top of on line, which makes it very hard to read.

And finally, a password that you would desire. This I leave up to you, but there is a format requirement. I have set up the system rules so that all passwords are in this form to discourage password guessing and the like. Please decide upon a password, and then write it down. The password MUST be in this form; "Word,Word" -twenty character's maximum, and this includes the comma separating the two words. The two words also must NOT be interrelated.

Here is an example of a valid password; "Picture,astronaut".

Once you have supplied this information, please be patient. I have been doing password validation on a daily basis, so it will

[continued next page]

Once Upon A Time In The Old West...

GUNSLINGER: An 8-bit review by Tom Johnson

GUNSLINGER by DATASOFT is a graphic adventure game which takes place in the old west. As Kip Starr, a former Texas Ranger, your goal is to rescue an old Ranger friend James Badland, now in jail in Tijuana, before he hangs.

Upon booting up the program, you will notice that either the joystick or the keyboard can be used for entering commands. The words are listed in three menus; nouns, verbs, and prepositions. However, using the joystick to enter commands does take more time than typing them in. The exception to this is when you move in the same direction several times in a row. All the player does then is to move the arrow to the letter of the direction with the joystick the first time, and make the rest of the moves by simply pushing the fire button.

The story opens with you getting a ride to a town from a

stranger after your horse dies in the desert. At this time you already get the feeling that all is not going to go your way. In town is where the fun starts. You learn how to search buildings, communicate with other characters in the story, and get the message that the Daltons, all six of them, are out of jail and after you. The Daltons make unexpected attempts on your life throughout the game, which keeps you on your toes. However, having been a resourceful Texas Ranger, you are able to outwit them.

Other obstacles you encounter are; a mine shaft, a fort, a ghost town, and Indians, but maybe not in that order. All have puzzles to solve which are not so difficult that the player gets stuck for a long time. This makes for an enjoyable game rather than one you get discouraged with and later shelve.

One of the good features of this game is that it doesn't let you

go too far without accomplishing what you should at a given point. This prevents backtracking through portions of the game you've seen looking for something you missed.

I would rate the graphics as very well done, with over 100 pictures to enjoy. That is why it takes three disks, both sides, to contain the program. Graphics like these do take a considerable amount of disk space.

Remember to examine all of the buildings, as well as the items you find along the way. Save your game several times as the Daltons and other hazards I won't mention here, may prevail. This enables you to restart where you left off instead of at the beginning again.

Overall, I would rate **GUNSLINGER** as excellent. It is user-friendly enough for the beginner, and enjoyable for the expert with its rapid succession of events. Price as tested: \$24.00

[SysOp's Korner cont.]

at least take that much time before you can really use the system. I will have to make a note here: I will be out of town, from the 2nd of August to the 8th of August. In this week, validation will be done when I return home on Sunday the 9th.

With the above information entered in, and after a cross check of all people with our club's data base, you will be validated. The simple rule on the system, is to keep it clean, and observe simple people-to-people interaction courtesy. As long as this is followed, you will have no problems on the system.

Once you're validated, (I may call you, then again I may not), I would advise that you simply use the [G]oto command the first time around. This will take you to each room, that has messages that you have not read. Using the read [N]ew 'N' command, you will be able to read all the messages that are new in

the system since the last time you logged on. If this is your first time on the system, then all messages will be flagged as being new to you. In any room, you may enter messages as you desire.

One of the commands that you can use at virtually any prompt, is the '?' command. This will bring you a short listing of the commands in the place that you are at. I particularly advise that you read all the message that are in the System Questions Room. In this room you will find many of the questions that you may have, already answered. If not, just leave a message, and you will most likely get an answer within a day or sooner.

Also advised, is to use the following command sequences; .R summary (period 'R' summary), this will bring you a verbose listing of all the 'HELP' files that are on the system to help you navigate the system more easily. Also; .R Extended (period 'R' extended),

This will bring you an explanation of all the 'Extended' commands that the system will accept.

There is much much more that I could go on about, but then the entire newsletter would consist of the Sysops Korner, and we all don't want that now do we?

From the information that you have just read, you will be able to log onto the system, and get around quite well. Feel free to experiment with the commands, as STadel is quite forgiving and actually quite sturdy.

Well, I hope that this will help you with most of the problems that you may have been encountering. Remember, if you have any questions, just leave them in the System Questions room or as private mail to me, as 'The Sysop'. I, as well as other's on the system, will be quite willing to help you out.

Hope to see you on the system soon.

Richard Dankert
MilAtari Ltd. SysOp

Dennis Does It Again! *Is There No Stopping This Man?*

New ST Public Domain Disks Added in July And August:

The following new ST disks have been added to our public domain ST library. They are filled to single-sided capacity. The cost is \$5.00 for each disk, but members may buy 3, and get 1 free. This charge covers the cost of the disk and a copying charge. All proceeds go to support the club.

DISK # 111 EDUCATIONAL/GAME

KIDGRAPH: Freehand painting program designed especially for kids.
KIDGRID: A painting program in which you can draw designs on a superimposed grid, sample design included.
KIDGRID2: An expanded version of the prior program, having a finer grid on which pictures may be drawn, several examples are included.
KIDPUZZL: A puzzle wherein you click on the squares in a grid to uncover a design.

DISK # 112 EDUCATIONAL/GAME

BARNYARD: A 2-person concentration or match-the-squares game based on Old McDonald's Farm.
KIDMUSIC: Pick one of 8 songs to play by clicking on a picture which illustrates the song.
KIDNOTES: Choose one of 10 songs by clicking on an icon of it and then clicking on the highlighted keys to play the song.
KIDPIANO: Click on your choice of piano or organ and click on the keys to play the notes.
STONEAGE: A colorful clear-the-maze game, similar to the 8-bit game Boulderdash, a game which stresses the puzzle element more than reflexes.

While the programs on both of these disks are designed primarily for children, they are very colorful and a delight to play with, whatever your age. They are very highly recommended.

DISK # 113 UTILITY

AMIGAFUN: Simulates Amiga operating system
BORDERS: Borders for Printmaster
CARDMAKER: Create greeting cards on your computer
DCOPY: Version 2.0 of D Copy
LOAN: Loan analysis program
NEOSNAP: Capture any full screen image into Neo format file
DENSITY: High density/High Res Picture Printer
PRINTIQUE: A printing utility
STRTUP13: Version 1.3 of Batch Startup Program.

DISK # 114 GAMES

DGDB: The Great German Videogame
MAGIC1: Mindreading game in Atari Basic
MILBORNE: A racing game in GFA Basic
PUZZLE1: An intriguing little puzzle
WOFED: Editor or filemaker for Wheel of Fortune game.

DISK # 115 UTILITY

This disk contains a collection of label printing programs, so you can compare and pick the one you want. Several are recent additions to our collection.

The programs are:

DISKLAB, DISKLABL,
FILEPRNT, LABELMAKR,
LABELS, LABELT,
LABELER and QUIKLBL2.

LIBRARY DISK SPECIAL REMINDER

MilAtari is offering a single-sided, two-disk set of a listing of the programs in the MilAtari ST Public Domain Library. The set will sell for \$5.00, the average cost for each disk is therefore \$2.50. These disks will only be sold as a set, however. The current configuration for the set is that each disk contains a text file of all the files in the library. One disk lists all files in alphabetical order, while the other lists them by disk. The name of the folder in which the files are found on the disks are shown, as well as the file size and all date-time stamp information. These files were created by a library program which is not presently in the public domain, so that program is not on the disk. However, the program only creates the files, and it is not needed to view or print them. The fact that the listing is a text file gives the user flexibility to edit or print out the data as desired. Also contained on the disks is the MilAtari Custom Icon Set and other miscellaneous files.

Dennis Wilson - ST Public Domain Librarian.

JUNE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

With the new administration settling in, the emphasis of this meeting was on taking the influx of new ideas and transforming them into new tangible benefits for the club. There were five major topics of discussion, Finance, Advertising, Tax Exempt Status, the BBS and the Midi-Interface Demo.

The state of our finances were described in a report given by Milatari Treasurer Karl Verbanac. They were as follows:

Existing balance*	\$426.35
June deposits:	\$250.00
June expenses	-\$102.50
Net Balance for June	\$573.85

Outstanding monies; Standing cash \$27.00, Eight bit library \$62.28. Items not included; BBS phone charges(Bill not received as of Board Meeting). *(Balance after cash outlays for June newsletter)

The discussion on advertising was lively and productive. It was announced that WEMP would carry promotional spots for us. These would be run at least six times during the week preceding a meeting. This is courtesy of Jim Morales and WEMP Radio.

Last month we sent out a total of 271 newsletters. Milatari President Bruce Welsch expressed the desire to have about 320 newsletters printed. This would be to allow for any extras we might need, and to have some that we could use for promotional distribution. Public Relations Director Tom Bardenwerper suggested that giving newsletters to shops that place ads in our newsletters is good promotion and that it was done in his business! It was pointed out that there was a problem that the cost of the

promotional newsletters quickly outran the revenue from advertising. Various compromises were discussed. The need to have flyers for the club was also talked about, as were posters. Bruce suggested the "Lets Go" section of the Journal as a cost-free means to notify the public of our meetings.

Milatari Attorney Tom Jacobs spoke briefly about the status of our Tax Exempt Status. A number of possible pitfalls were discussed, all of which seemed to be very minor. These included the possibility that the by-laws would need slight alterations. Though it was Tom's advice that we may be able to file without any alterations at all. Also voiced were concerns about possible flack from the State Government, which will require that we observe the State Sales Tax when selling anything!

BBS SysOp Rich Dankert formally announced our new 16-bit BBS to the board, and outlined the service of the old system. The old system logged 14,024 calls to disk, the bulk of which came after the switch to 1200 baud operation. We averaged 200 calls per month at 300 baud, and that pace more than tripled at 1200 baud operation. The old system had over 3,000 messages posted (in less than 2 years)! The list of club owned equipment from the old system includes the following:

- 1) 64k Atari 400 with Basic Cartridge, 1) 1050 drive with US doubler installed, 1) 850 interface & 1) 820 printer.

The Trak drive and two slave drives will be returned (with thanks) to former Milatari President, Mr. David Frazer, who had lent them to the club.

The New System, which was lent to the Club by Milatari VP David Mumper, pending the clubs purchase of the equipment, includes a double-sided drive, a single-sided drive, and a 520ST.

The Avatex 1200 baud modem, from the old system was transferred to the new system.

Details of the upcoming Midi-Interface Demo were discussed. There was wide spread agreement on the importance of this, because it will mark the beginning of the club's interaction with the students and faculty at UWM. I (your Secretary), talked about the conversation I had with the Professor teaching the Midi class in the Music Department. The jist of which was that he was very responsive to the idea of Milatari giving his class a demonstration of the Atari's Midi capabilities. Milatari VP David Mumper sketched out some ideas about how the demo might look, and whom it should include.

There were several motions made at the board meeting, all of which were carried unanimously. These were as follows:

- 1) Charge one dollar to update any ST-library disk.
- 2) Empower Tom Bardenwerper to solicit and collect revenue for advertising in the newsletter.
- 3) To send a donation to David Parsons who worked on STADEL, the share-ware public domain software our BBS is running. The amount was not specified.
- 4) To purchase the equipment for the BBS, from David Mumper, by paying him the sum total of \$500.00, in monthly installments of \$50.00, contingent upon the club having \$50.00 in the given month.

Respectfully submitted:

Demetrius Sotiriades
Mil-Atari Ltd
Secretary

JULY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

This month's the main topics of discussion revolved around the newsletter, and upcoming events, most notably the picnic.

It was announced McKinley Park by the lakefront will be the site of the picnic. Jim Morales has donated a quarter barrel for all of those of legal drinking age. The rest of the board members were volunteered by Bruce to each donate a twenty four pack of soda, for those that don't wish to drink or are too young to drink (whether they wish to or not). The board members consented with a hearty groan. Seventy five dollars was set aside to cover vittles and miscellaneous expenses. There will also be a volleyball net courtesy of Ron Friedel.

Perhaps the most

important thing that was discussed concerning the picnic was the success Bruce had in getting software companies to donate software as prizes to be won at the picnic.

This month's newsletter will be the first under the leadership of Jim Morales who assumed the editors position from Paul Kuehn. Jim announced that it will be a combined July - August newsletter. It will also be the first one laser printed, and it will be about twenty pages in length. It was decided to print up 300 newsletters.

Rich Dankert gave his state of the BBS address. Response to the new bbs has been good with 517 messages being posted and the system averaging about 30 calls per day. Some minor problems

occurred with the system at 1200 baud. Rich was able to determine the cause of the problem, which turned out to be the heat and cleverly remedied it with a small fan.

Tom Bardenwerper has sent five letters to various Atari-oriented publications, asking them to print information about our club. The magazines are; Atari Explorer, ST-Log, STart, ST-Compute and faSTER.

There were several motions passed, these included motions to: 1. Reimburse the President for telephone expenses incurred on behalf of MilAtari. 2. Look into pricing for new MilAtari stationary. Respectfully submitted: Demetrius Sotiriades MilAtari Ltd. Secretary

Just In Case You Wondered...

Between Bruce, Michelle and myself you've heard a lot of things relative to members writing reviews or articles for this newsletter. Aside from our respective pleas in this issue, this will be the last time that your money is spent asking you to fill your newsletter. The decision has been made to issue a newsletter consistent with the size of our member's contributions. So, no more begging, no more pleading. From now on, you directly control the size of this publication.

All of which is well and good provided everybody understands what goes into writing an article. The real bottom-line is that it doesn't take much! So, just so that you can't say; "I don't know how", here's a little guideline to get you started...

Rule #1: Remember why you're writing it in the first place. The club benefits enormously from the experiences of others.

The absolute best thing you can do is to pass along your experiences as accurately and clearly as possible. That requires...

Rule #2: Get your thoughts organized. The best reviews are those which detail experiences from the moment you open the package to the time you turn off the machine a week later. The best bet is to make yourself a simple outline of the things that you think are the most important. Don't even worry about whether or not what you think is important will be important to others. If you think it's worth mentioning, mention it! Which brings us to...

Rule #3: Go nuts! If you think the opening screen is just great, let's hear about it! If you think the instructions are a piece of buffalo dropping, then say so! And don't be afraid to say how you think something could have

been done better. The computer after-market literally lives or dies based on consumer preference. You're a consumer so give 'em heck! Which brings us to...

Rule #4: Try to be as fair as possible. If what you expected is impossible, then it's hard to complain. But if what you expected is reasonable and falls within the price you paid for an item, you have every right to speak your mind. Once you've spoken, observe;

Rule #5: Don't dawdle! Upload it, mail it, pony express it, but make sure it gets here! I'll worry about the spelling and how it looks on the page. That's all there is to it, all you have to do now is follow...

Rule #6: Sit back and enjoy the fact that you've not only gotten your name in print, but that somewhere along the line you've helped someone who really needed it! [Ed.]

Things Said In Parting...

Ltd. Perspectives by Jim Morales, Editor

THING #1: Thanks on behalf of the entire club to Mr. Rick Ohde for donating the use of his laser printer for use in printing this newsletter. He's been of tremendous help in making this all happen. Rick works at the new Mayfair Computers South store near Southridge and has an ST at home. Thanks again Rick!

THING #2: Thanks to Paul Kuehn, Jerry Fenning, and everyone who contributed to this edition of the newsletter. It could not have been done without you.

THING #3: I haven't quite gotten the complete feel for how the laser output compares with what I've got on-screen. Please bear with me as I get used to it. It'll get better, I promise.

THING #4: Seeing as you've gotten this far, you've already figured out that there is a great deal more ST information than 8-bit. THIS IS NOT BY DESIGN!!!!

Neither the club, nor the staff of this newsletter have any intention of leaving the Atari 8-bit line out in the cold to fend for itself. It is our intention to ensure that there is no preferential treatment given to the ST at the expense of the 8-bit. Steps are being taken to ensure that equal coverage is applied to both in all aspects of club endeavors.

In recent times a number of Atari user groups have split up along 8-bit/ST lines and gone their own separate ways. Unfortunately, this has often led to the subsequent dissolution of one group or the other. I have the firm assurance of club officers that this WILL NOT be the

case for MilAtari Ltd. We want to send a clear and unmistakeable message to members, potential members, retailers and manufacturers that there will be strong, energetic and continued support for both Atari personal computer systems.

As you have already read, Atari is planning a media push for this fall. While it is regrettable that the main focus of this appears to be on the rejuvenated game systems, it is nonetheless essential to point out that BOTH computer systems will be supported in this campaign. As most long-time Atari users have been used to watching the game systems get the "glory", this is welcome relief. It's certainly not enough by any stretch of the imagination, but we'll take what we can get.

It is therefore going to be incumbent upon the members of MilAtari Ltd. to ensure that the 8-bit line does not suffer from the sheer weight of ST momentum, or a spate of game machine media hype. For the record; 8-bit articles, reviews, and general information will be given a priority in this newsletter. It is our goal that in the very near future we will achieve a 50/50 balance of 8-bit/ST information in these pages.

Our ability to meet that goal depends directly upon contributions made by the membership. Those of you who purchase 8-bit software are encouraged to review it for this newsletter. Those of you who have achieved a degree of mastery over the Wedge and its offspring are encouraged to share your knowledge with others using

these pages as a vehicle. For goodness sake, don't be shy!

All of this is beginning to sound pretty heavy-duty. Before I get too carried away, allow me to remind all of us that the bottom line is having fun! The great feelings that arose out of sharing and exchanging information is what brought this club together in the first place! We would be doing ourselves a great disservice were we to allow those feelings to fade.

No one, repeat, no one, knows these machines better than we do. Maybe what we all need is a reminder that somewhere out there someone is plugging in their machine for the first time. If they feel half as lost as I did when I first booted up the ST after 6+ years of working on the 8-bit, then I know that we can help them. Your contributions to this newsletter will be part of that help. I'll be glad to help you in any way I can regarding putting articles together, but it's your ballgame...

ONE LAST THING: It doesn't make a whole lot of sense to waste the club's money reprinting articles from newsletters that you can easily check out from the club library. Reprints will be kept to an absolute minimum. As such, what we get from you will be what you see. An 8-page newsletter makes my job a cake-walk, I look forward to you making my job a real pain in the interface.....

-Jim-

MilAtari Ltd. User Group & Newsletter Information

MilAtari Ltd. The Milwaukee Area Atari User's Group

MilAtari Ltd. is an independent user education group which is not affiliated with Atari Corp. The newsletter MilAtari Ltd. Edition, is the official publication of MilAtari Ltd., and is intended for the education of its members, as well as for the dissemination of information regarding Atari computer products and related merchandise.

MilAtari membership is open to individuals and families who are interested in using and programming Atari and other types of computers. Membership includes a subscription to this newsletter and access to the club libraries. Annual membership fee is \$20.00 for individuals or \$25.00 per family.

MilAtari Ltd. also operates a 24 hour electronic bulletin board service. This service is available to all computer users at no charge and is for the sole purpose of exchanging information and public domain programs for Atari personal computers. MilAtari Ltd. maintains a strong anti-piracy policy with regards to computer software. The BBS functions at 300/1200 baud and can be reached at (414) 781-5710.

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AD SIZE	COST(US \$)
Full Page	\$37.50
Half Page	\$20.00
Quarter Page	\$12.50
Business Card	\$5.00

MilAtari Ltd. members whose dues are current may place classified advertisements in the newsletter at no charge.

Submission Policy

Contributions of articles are always welcome. Quite frankly, we thrive on them! Articles may be submitted on either 8-bit or ST diskette, in typewritten form or uploaded directly to the MilAtari Ltd. Bulletin Board System via modem. All submissions must be received no later than the 28th of the month.

Now, we wouldn't ask you to do something for nothing, so it is the policy of MilAtari Ltd. that the authors of articles actually published in the newsletter may select one disk of their choice from either of the club's public domain libraries. You may claim your disk after the actual publication of the newsletter and arrange for obtaining it by contacting the appropriate librarian listed in the column to the left. This applies to club members only.

You will also have our undying thanks!



MilAtari Ltd.
The Milwaukee Area
Atari Users Group
P.O. Box 19858
West Allis, Wisconsin
53219-0858

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